



NEWS RELEASE

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INS CRACKS DOWN ON MIGRANT SMUGGLING AT LAX

LOS ANGELES, Calif. ? As part of its ongoing commitment to curb migrant smuggling and the victimization and violence it breeds, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has stepped up its anti-smuggling enforcement efforts at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The move is aimed at curbing a recent increase in migrant smugglers' use of LAX as a transit point by denying the smugglers access to one of the West Coast's major transportation hubs.

In the first two days of the initiative, which began Monday, INS Special Agents apprehended 146 undocumented immigrants, all of them from Mexico and Central America. Interviews with the migrants revealed that some had paid as much as \$2000 for the smugglers' services.

"In the coming days, our agents will be maintaining a high profile presence throughout LAX," said Los Angeles INS District Director Thomas J. Schiltgen. "Where you have migrant smuggling you have crime and violence against entire communities and we are determined to do everything possible to put a stop to it."

After being transported to INS facilities in downtown Los Angeles, the migrants were processed for return to their home countries.

"The INS will continue to target transportation hubs and other public areas until smugglers get the message that they can't do business in our backyard," Schiltgen said.

Editor's Note - Sony Betacam b-roll of the LAX enforcement initiative shot by an INS videographer will be available after 6:00 p.m. this afternoon through a pool arrangement with KVEA-TV. KVEA will send out an advisory over CNS regarding the pool feed. If you have any questions, call KVEA's assignment desk at (818) 502-5711 after 6:00 p.m.

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